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A PLANNING ENGINE FOR A PARCEL SHIPPING SYSTEM

Abstract of the Disclosure

A planning engine for use in a planning system which is in turn used to plan shipment of a parcel of at least one item, the planning including routing and rating the shipment. The planning system, of which the planning engine is a component, includes a router for determining possible routes for the shipment (each route a carrier and a service), a rater for rating each possible route, a consolidator for attempting to consolidate a list of shipments, and a prorater for allocating costs of a consolidation among the consolidated shipments, and also has read and write access to a shipping database. Its component planning engine includes: an input module for providing a list including each shipment for which planning is to be performed; a load list template builder, responsive to the list including each shipment for which planning is to be performed, for providing a load list template indicating at least one load, each load having an associated stop, each stop having an associated shipment, each shipment having at least one associated item; an analyzer, responsive to the load list template, for planning in turn how to ship each of the shipments indicated by the load list template by making use of the router and the rater, for providing a load list indicating a carrier and service for each shipment of the load list template; and an output module, for providing the load list in a manner corresponding to the form of the planning request information.